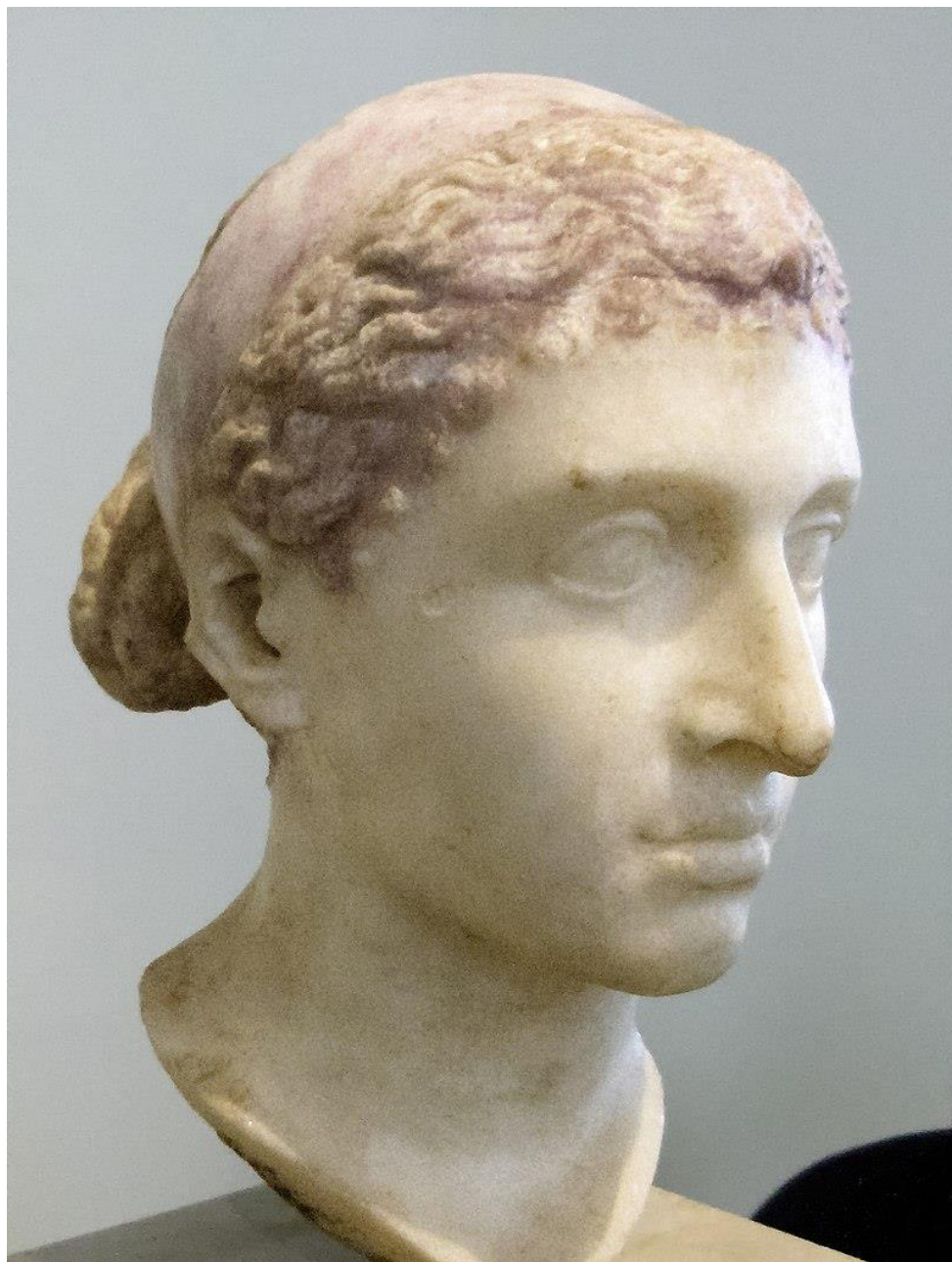


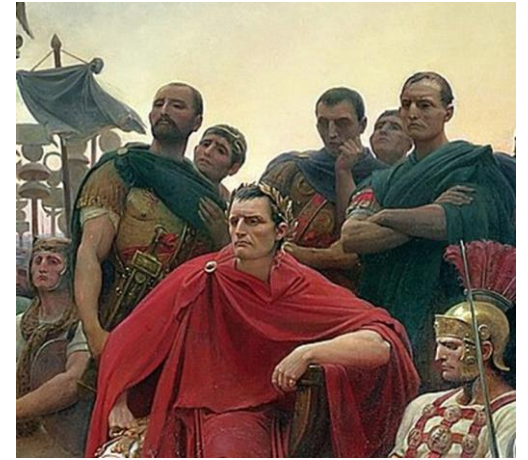


Cleopatra and Julius Ceasar

Cleopatra VII Thea Philopator lit. Cleopatra "father-loving goddess"; 70/69 BC – 10 August 30 BC) was Queen of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt from 51 to 30 BC, and its last active ruler. A member of the Ptolemaic dynasty, she was a descendant of its founder Ptolemy I Soter, a Macedonian Greek general and companion of Alexander the Great. After the death of Cleopatra, Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire, marking the end of the last Hellenistic-period state in the Mediterranean and of the age that had lasted since the reign of Alexander (336–323 BC). Her first language was Koine Greek, and she was the only known Ptolemaic ruler to learn the Egyptian language.

In 58 BC, Cleopatra presumably accompanied her father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, during his exile to Rome after a revolt in Egypt (a Roman client state) allowed his rival daughter Berenice IV to claim his throne. Berenice was killed in 55 BC when Ptolemy returned to Egypt with Roman military assistance. When he died in 51 BC, the joint reign of Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIII began, but a falling-out between them led to an open civil war.

After losing the 48 BC Battle of Pharsalus in Greece against his rival Julius Caesar (a Roman dictator and consul) in Caesar's civil war, the Roman statesman Pompey fled to Egypt. Pompey had been a political ally of Ptolemy XII, but Ptolemy XIII, at the urging of his court eunuchs, had Pompey ambushed and killed before Caesar arrived and occupied Alexandria.



Cleopatra and Julius Ceasar

Caesar then attempted to reconcile the rival Ptolemaic siblings, but Ptolemy's chief adviser, Potheinos, viewed Caesar's terms as favoring Cleopatra, so his forces besieged her and Caesar at the palace. Shortly after the siege was lifted by reinforcements, Ptolemy XIII died in the Battle of the Nile; Cleopatra's half-sister Arsinoe IV was eventually exiled to Ephesus for her role in carrying out the siege. Caesar declared Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIV joint rulers but maintained a private affair with Cleopatra that produced a son, Caesarion. Cleopatra traveled to Rome as a client queen in 46 and 44 BC, where she stayed at Caesar's villa. After Caesar's assassination, followed shortly afterwards by that of Ptolemy XIV (on Cleopatra's orders), she named Caesarion co-ruler as Ptolemy XV.

In the Liberators' civil war of 43–42 BC, Cleopatra sided with the Roman Second Triumvirate formed by Caesar's grandnephew and heir Octavian, Mark Antony, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. After their meeting at Tarsos in 41 BC, the queen had an affair with Antony which produced three children. He carried out the execution of Arsinoe at her request, and became increasingly reliant on Cleopatra for both funding and military aid during his invasions of the Parthian Empire and the Kingdom of Armenia.

The Donations of Alexandria declared their children rulers over various erstwhile territories under Antony's triumviral authority. This event, their marriage, and Antony's divorce of Octavian's sister Octavia Minor led to the final war of the Roman Republic. Octavian engaged in a war of propaganda, forced Antony's allies in the Roman Senate to flee Rome in 32 BC, and declared war on Cleopatra.

After defeating Antony and Cleopatra's naval fleet at the 31 BC Battle of Actium, Octavian's forces invaded Egypt in 30 BC and defeated Antony, leading to Antony's suicide. When Cleopatra learned that Octavian planned to bring her to his Roman triumphal procession, she killed herself by poisoning, contrary to the popular belief that she was bitten by an asp.

Cleopatra's legacy survives in ancient and modern works of art. Roman historiography and Latin poetry produced a generally critical view of the queen that pervaded later Medieval and Renaissance literature. In the visual arts, her ancient depictions include Roman busts, paintings, and sculptures, cameo carvings and glass, Ptolemaic and Roman coinage, and reliefs. In Renaissance and Baroque art, she was the subject of many works including operas, paintings, poetry, sculptures, and theatrical dramas. She has become a pop culture icon of Egyptomania since the Victorian era, and in modern times, Cleopatra has appeared in the applied and fine arts, burlesque satire, Hollywood films, and brand images for commercial products.

Roman interventionism in Egypt predated the reign of Cleopatra. When Ptolemy IX Lathyros died in late 81 BC, he was succeeded by his daughter Berenice III. With opposition building at the royal court against the idea of a sole reigning female monarch, Berenice III accepted joint rule and marriage with her cousin and stepson Ptolemy XI Alexander II, an arrangement made by the Roman dictator Sulla. Ptolemy XI had his wife killed shortly after their marriage in 80 BC, and was lynched soon after in the resulting riot over the assassination. Ptolemy XI, and perhaps his uncle Ptolemy IX or father Ptolemy X Alexander I, willed the Ptolemaic Kingdom to Rome as collateral for loans, so that the Romans had legal grounds to take over Egypt, their client state, after the assassination of Ptolemy XI. The Romans chose instead to divide the Ptolemaic realm among the illegitimate sons of Ptolemy IX, bestowing Cyprus on Ptolemy of Cyprus and Egypt on Ptolemy XII Auletes.



Most likely a posthumously painted portrait of Cleopatra with red hair and her distinct facial features, wearing a royal diadem and pearl-studded hairpins, from Roman Herculaneum, Italy, 1st century AD

The Roman Republic (green) and Ptolemaic Egypt (yellow) in 40 BC



Ptolemy XII died sometime before 22 March 51 BC, when Cleopatra, in her first act as queen, began her voyage to Hermonthis, near Thebes, to install a new sacred Buchis bull, worshiped as an intermediary for the god Montu in the Ancient Egyptian religion. Cleopatra faced several pressing issues and emergencies shortly after taking the throne. These included famine caused by drought and a low level of the annual flooding of the Nile, and lawless behavior instigated by the Gabiniani, the now unemployed and assimilated Roman soldiers left by Gabinus to garrison Egypt. Inheriting her father's debts, Cleopatra also owed the Roman Republic 17.5 million drachmas.

Relationship with Julius Caesar

Ptolemy XIII arrived at Alexandria at the head of his army, in clear defiance of Caesar's demand that he disband and leave his army before his arrival. Cleopatra initially sent emissaries to Caesar, but upon allegedly hearing that Caesar was inclined to having affairs with royal women, she came to Alexandria to see him personally. Historian Cassius Dio records that she did so without informing her brother, dressed in an attractive manner, and charmed Caesar with her wit. Plutarch provides an entirely different account that alleges she was bound inside a bed sack to be smuggled into the palace to meet Caesar. When Ptolemy XIII realized that his sister was in the palace consorting directly with Caesar, he attempted to rouse the populace of Alexandria into a riot, but he was arrested by Caesar, who used his oratorical skills to calm the frenzied crowd. Caesar then brought Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIII before the assembly of Alexandria, where Caesar revealed the written will of Ptolemy XII—previously possessed by Pompey—naming Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIII as his joint heirs.



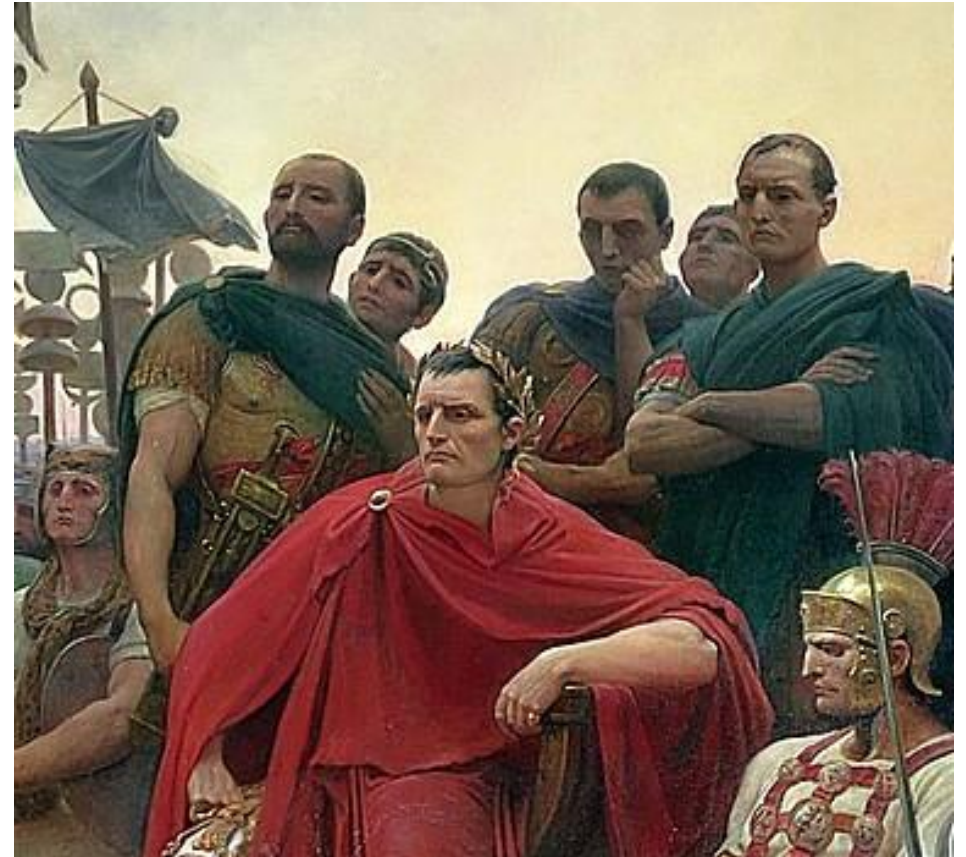
Caesar then attempted to arrange for the other two siblings, Arsinoe IV and Ptolemy XIV, to rule together over Cyprus, thus removing potential rival claimants to the Egyptian throne while also appeasing the Ptolemaic subjects still bitter over the loss of Cyprus to the Romans in 58 BC.

Judging that this agreement favored Cleopatra over Ptolemy XIII and that the latter's army of 20,000, including the Gabiniani, could most likely defeat Caesar's army of 4,000 unsupported troops, Potheinos decided to have Achilles lead their forces to Alexandria to attack both Caesar and Cleopatra.

After Caesar managed to execute Potheinos, Arsinoe IV joined forces with Achilles and was declared queen, but soon afterward had her tutor Ganymedes kill Achilles and take his position as commander of her army. Ganymedes then tricked Caesar into requesting the presence of the erstwhile captive Ptolemy XIII as a negotiator, only to have him join the army of Arsinoe IV. The resulting siege of the palace, with Caesar and Cleopatra trapped together inside, lasted into the following year of 47 BC.



Sometime between January and March of 47 BC, Caesar's reinforcements arrived, including those led by Mithridates of Pergamon and Antipater the Idumaeen. Ptolemy XIII and Arsinoe IV withdrew their forces to the Nile, where Caesar attacked them. Ptolemy XIII tried to flee by boat, but it capsized, and he drowned. Ganymedes may have been killed in the battle. Theodotus was found years later in Asia, by Marcus Junius Brutus, and executed. Arsinoe IV was forcefully paraded in Caesar's triumph in Rome before being exiled to the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Cleopatra was conspicuously absent from these events and resided in the palace, most likely because she had been pregnant with Caesar's child since September 48 BC.



Caesar's term as consul had expired at the end of 48 BC. However, Antony, an officer of his, helped to secure Caesar's appointment as dictator lasting for a year, until October 47 BC, providing Caesar with the legal authority to settle the dynastic dispute in Egypt. Wary of repeating the mistake of Cleopatra's sister Berenice IV in having a female monarch as sole ruler, Caesar appointed Cleopatra's 12-year-old brother, Ptolemy XIV, as joint ruler with the 22-year-old Cleopatra in a nominal sibling marriage, but Cleopatra continued living privately with Caesar. The exact date at which Cyprus was returned to her control is not known, although she had a governor there by 42 BC.

Caesar is alleged to have joined Cleopatra for a cruise of the Nile and sightseeing of Egyptian monuments, although this may be a romantic tale reflecting later well-to-do Roman proclivities and not a real historical event. The historian Suetonius provided considerable details about the voyage, including use of Thalamegos, the pleasure barge constructed by Ptolemy IV, which during his reign measured 90 metres (300 ft) in length and 24 metres (80 ft) in height and was complete with dining rooms, state rooms, holy shrines, and promenades along its two decks, resembling a floating villa.



Caesar could have had an interest in the Nile cruise owing to his fascination with geography; he was well-read in the works of Eratosthenes and Pytheas, and perhaps wanted to discover the source of the river, but turned back before reaching Ethiopia.

Caesar departed from Egypt around April 47 BC, allegedly to confront Pharnaces II of Pontus, the son of Mithridates VI of Pontus, who was stirring up trouble for Rome in Anatolia. It is possible that Caesar, married to the prominent Roman woman Calpurnia, also wanted to avoid being seen together with Cleopatra when she had their son. He left three legions in Egypt, later increased to four, under the command of the freedman Rufio, to secure Cleopatra's tenuous position, but also perhaps to keep her activities in check.

Caesarion, Cleopatra's alleged child with Caesar, was born 23 June 47 BC and was originally named "Pharaoh Caesar", as preserved on a stele at the Serapeum of Saqqara.





Cleopatra and her nominal joint ruler Ptolemy XIV visited Rome sometime in late 46 BC, presumably without Caesarion, and were given lodging in Caesar's villa within the Horti Caesaris. As with their father Ptolemy XII, Caesar awarded both Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIV the legal status of "friend and ally of the Roman people" (Latin: socius et amicus populi Romani), in effect client rulers loyal to Rome. Cleopatra's visitors at Caesar's villa across the Tiber included the senator Cicero, who found her arrogant. Sosigenes of Alexandria, one of the members of Cleopatra's court, aided Caesar in the calculations for the new Julian calendar, put into effect 1 January 45 BC. The Temple of Venus Genetrix, established in the Forum of Caesar on 25 September 46 BC, contained a golden statue of Cleopatra (which stood there at least until the 3rd century AD), associating the mother of Caesar's child directly with the goddess Venus, mother of the Romans. The statue also subtly linked the Egyptian goddess Isis with the Roman religion.

Cleopatra's presence in Rome most likely had an effect on the events at the Lupercalia festival a month before Caesar's assassination. Antony attempted to place a royal diadem on Caesar's head, but the latter refused in what was most likely a staged performance, perhaps to gauge the Roman public's mood about accepting Hellenistic-style kingship. Cicero, who was present at the festival, mockingly asked where the diadem came from, an obvious reference to the Ptolemaic queen whom he abhorred. Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March (15 March 44 BC), but Cleopatra stayed in Rome until about mid-April, in the vain hope of having Caesarion recognized as Caesar's heir. However, Caesar's will named his grandnephew Octavian as the primary heir, and Octavian arrived in Italy around the same time Cleopatra decided to depart for Egypt



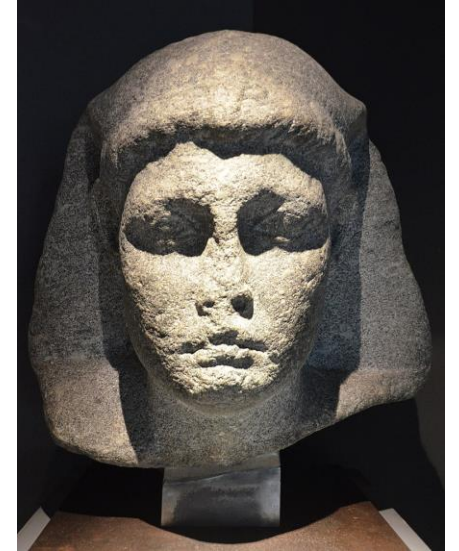
Cleopatra's Gate in Tarsos (now Tarsus, Mersin, Turkey), the site where she met Mark Antony in 41 BC



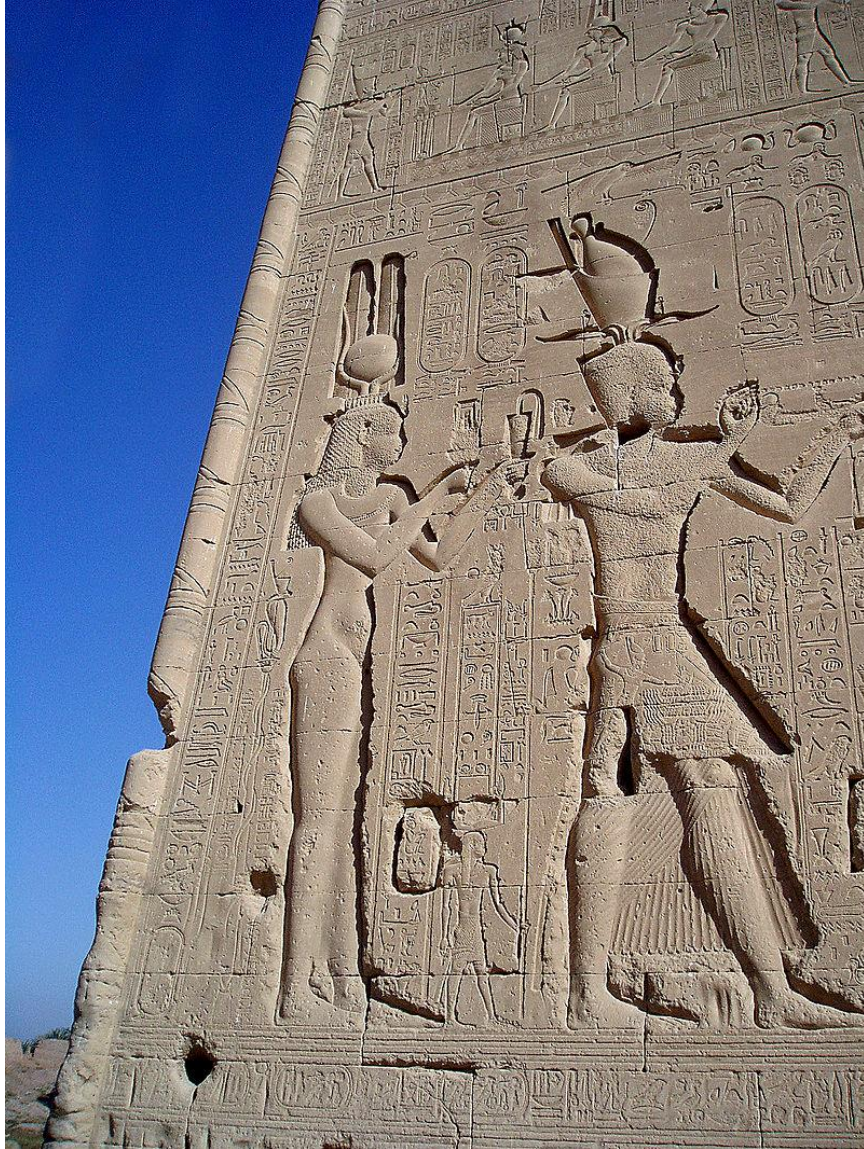


Ptolemy XV Caesarion. Caesarion (born at the 23th June 47 BC) was the son of Cleopatra VII and Caesar. The child appears early in hieroglyphic Egyptian sources as Pharaoh, and son of Caesar, whereas in Rome itself Caesar seems never to have mentioned the child.

Ptolemy Caesar was born in Egypt on 23 June 47 BC. His mother Cleopatra gave him the royal names Theos Philopator Philometor (lit. 'father-loving, mother-loving God') and insisted that he was the son of Roman politician and dictator Julius Caesar. While he was said to have inherited Caesar's looks and manner, Caesar did not officially acknowledge him.



All accusations of bastardy against Caesarion were cast from a Roman perspective; their intention was not to portray Caesarion as inappropriate for the throne of Egypt, but rather to deny that he was Julius' heir by Roman law. One of Caesar's supporters, Gaius Oppius, even wrote a pamphlet which attempted to prove that Caesar could not have fathered Caesarion. Nevertheless, Caesar may have allowed Caesarion to use his name. The matter became contentious when Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, came into conflict with Cleopatra.



**Left: reliefs of Cleopatra and Caesarion at the Temple of Dendera
Right: a limestone stela of the High Priest of Ptah bearing the cartouches of Cleopatra and Caesarion, Egypt, Ptolemaic Period, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London**



This mid-1st century AD Roman wall painting in Pompeii, Italy, showing Venus holding a cupid is most likely a depiction of Cleopatra VII of Ptolemaic Egypt as Venus Genetrix, with her son Caesarion as the cupid



AI

